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Public Testimony to the Illinois House Redistricting Committee

Presented by Valerie F. Leonard, Founder, Nonprofit Utopia, LLC

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Good afternoon. My name is Valerie Leonard. First of all, I thank Speaker Welch, Representative Hernandez, Representative Tarver, Representative LaShawn Ford and Representative Collins for adding today's hearing to focus on Cook County and Chicago's West Side communities. We appreciate your taking the time from your extremely busy schedules to listen to our concerns. We also want to let you know that we appreciate your staff's outreach efforts to ensure that as many people who wanted the opportunity to voice their concerns could do so.

I am the Founder of Nonprofit Utopia, the ideal community for emerging nonprofit leaders who want to build their own leadership skills while building the capacity of their organizations to make a positive impact on their clients and communities. Our membership includes nonprofit leaders from around Chicago, including the West, South and North sides; other states and abroad. Our mission is to develop the next generation of ethical nonprofit leaders, with a vision to train 50,000 people by 2033. This is achieved through consulting, coaching, an online community, livestreamed videos and podcasting.

We are convening Illinois African Americans for Equitable Redistricting to engage Black leaders around the State of Illinois to provide education on redistricting and to engage them in the process. We have provided workshops on the redistricting process and how to navigate ilga.gov and the Senate and House redistricting websites.

Nonprofit Utopia, IVI-IPO and the Chicago Lawyer's Committee on Civil Rights are partnering to provide a series of workshops for community based organizations on a number of topics, including the state and federal voting rights acts and proposed changes; the redistricting process; developing public testimony, etc. We are also hosting the Census Bureau to facilitate a workshop on navigating Census.gov; creating data sets and understanding reapportionment.

I am a CoFounder of the Lawndale Alliance, a neighborhood association of local residents who come together on an ad hoc basis to address issues of concern to the community through grassroots community organizing, advocacy and community outreach. We were part of a statewide, multi-cultural coalition of grassroots organizations, facilitated by UCCRO, who came together to develop proposals to optimize opportunities for minorities around the State of Illinois to select candidates of their choice. Our map proposal provided more majority-minority districts than any other proposal in the state of Illinois. We are collaborating again this year to work on a Unity Map.

We respectfully request, that, as you develop the new map that you take into consideration the following:

North Lawndale is a Community of Interest

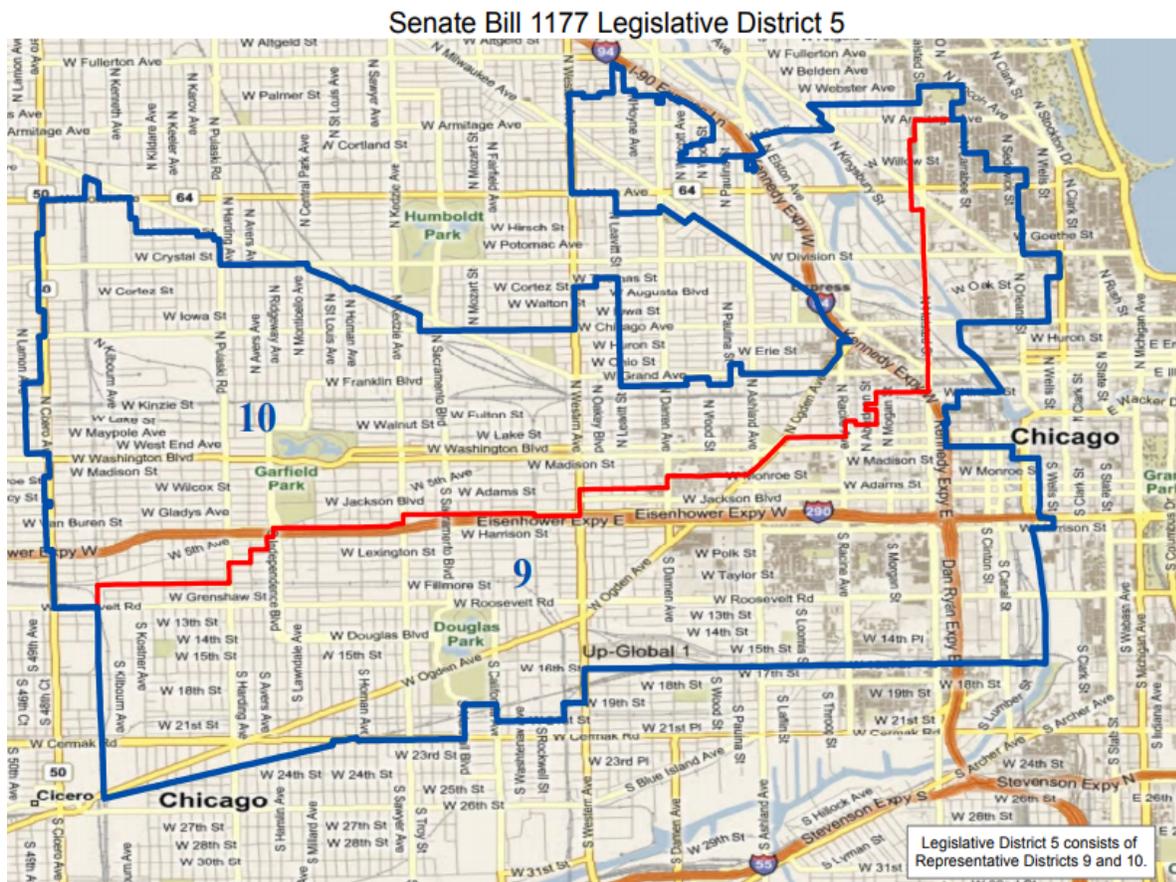
The North Lawndale community is located approximately 3 miles west of the Chicago Downtown. As of 2018, the racial composition was 87% African American, 5.27% Hispanic, 8.83% White, .17% Asian, and .61% of some other race. The community continues to struggle with issues of high rates of poverty and unemployment, blighted commercial districts, high crime, poor performing schools, high mortgage foreclosure rates, lack of access to decent and affordable housing, and limited access to health care. We have a significant number of people in the community who have been classified as Hard to Count under the 2020 Census program. Our community is also among one of the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, including high instances of COVID-19; increased poverty and homelessness due to COVID-related job loss and business closures and widened educational achievement gaps due to our children being out of school for prolonged periods of time.

While we have a number of challenges, we also have a number of assets, including Douglas Park designed by the legendary landscape architect Jens Jensen and the Historic K-Town District, one of the largest concentrations of historic Greystone houses in the City of Chicago. The community is held together by its history and culture, which includes block clubs, community gardening, basketball games and gospel festivals. North Lawndale nurtured the talents of such people as Dina Washington, Ramsey Lewis, Otis Clay, Koko Taylor, Cicero Blake, Mark Aguire, Darryl Stingley, Mickey Johnson and Michael Scott, to name a few. The community has completed a combined comprehensive plan and Quality of Life Plan, with technical assistance from CMAP and LISC. The plan is in its implementation stages, and is attracting billions of dollars in investment. Indeed, I am very proud to have played an integral role in the development of the infrastructure for the planning process, including writing the proposals to CMAP and LISC.

North Lawndale covers approximately 33% of the land mass in Representative District 9, and a little less than 20% of Senate District 5. Approximately 80% of North Lawndale's land mass is in the 24th Ward, and the 24th Ward accounts for nearly half of Representative District 9's weighted vote, and about a fourth of the weighted vote for Senate District 5. North Lawndale is in the 7th Congressional District. The voters of Representative District 9 tend to vote Democratic.

The Lawndale Alliance is a neighborhood association of local residents who come together on an ad hoc basis to address issues of concern to the community through grassroots community organizing, advocacy and community outreach. We hold annual TIF town hall meetings series on a number of topics, including status reports on the financial and programmatic performance of every TIF that impacts North Lawndale; the performance of North Lawndale schools; the pros and cons of hosting Olympic venue in North Lawndale; and a status report on the impact of the mortgage foreclosure crisis and the level of Neighborhood Stabilization Program funding the community received to put abandoned foreclosed properties back on the property tax rolls as affordable housing units.

Illinois Senate District 5



Illinois State Senate District 5 includes Illinois Legislative District 9 and Illinois Legislative District 10. While the district is not shaped in a square, it goes as far south as Ogden and Cicero; as far west as Lamon, north of Kinzie; as far north as I-90 and Fullerton, and as far east as Wells and Division. (These are approximations based on the map above.) The blue line depicts the border of the entire 5th Senate District, while the red line separates Legislative District 9 from Legislative District 10. Major community assets include Douglas Park, Garfield Park, Ogden Avenue (Historic Route 66, which connects Chicago and California), I-290, I-94, University of

Illinois, the West Loop, parts of Downtown, including the Financial District and Illinois Medical District.

As may be seen on the table on the following page, the total population in the Illinois Senate District 5 increased from 206,793 in 2010 to 221,544 in 2018. This represents an increase of 14,751 people or 7.13%. The White population increased from 29.9% of the Senate District population in 2010 to 31.23% during the same period. This represents a 1.33 percentage **point** change, or a 4.45% increase between the last Census count and 2018. The Black population decreased from 53% of the Senate District 5 population in 2010 to 46.9% of the District’s population in 2018. This represents a 6.10 percentage **point** decrease, but an 11.51% decrease in the Black population between 2010 and 2018. The Latino population comprised 10.4% of the Senate District 5 population in 2010, and 13.20% in 2018. This represents a 2.80 **percentage point** increase, or a 26.92% change in Latino population in the Senate District 5 population.

The number of housing units went from 99,884 in 2010 to 103,449, suggesting a net increase in housing stock 3,565, or 3.57%. The average ratio of people to housing units increased from 2.07 persons per housing unit to 2.14 persons per housing unit.

Illinois Senate District 5 Demographics

	2010	2018	Change	Percent Change
Total Population	206,793	221,544	14,751.00	7.13%
White	29.90%	31.23%	1.33	4.45%
Black	53.00%	46.90%	-6.10	-11.51%
Native American	0.10%	0.10%	-	0.00%
Asian	5.10%	6.40%	1.30	25.49%
Latino/Hispanic	10.40%	13.20%	2.80	26.92%
Other	1.50%	2.17%	0.67	44.67%
Housing Units	99,884	103,449	3,565	3.57%

The Black population in Senate District 5 has dropped 11.51%, between 2010 and 2018, which is significant. While the Apportionment data have not been released, it would not be surprising if they show a further decline in the number and percentages of Black population in Legislative District 9. At the same time, the Asian population, with a growth rate of 25.49%, is growing at more than 3 times the 7.13% growth rate for the District. Even so, their population is only 6.4% of the District’s population at the moment. The Latino population has grown 26.92%, which is nearly 4 times the growth of the District as a whole. The White population has also grown significantly, at 4.45%. If the District boundaries remain the same, it will no longer be a majority Black district. The District will have a Black plurality, comprising 46.9% of the District’s population. Whites would comprise the second largest population segment, with 31.23%. Latinos would comprise the third largest segment, with 13.2% of the population.

Illinois Legislative District 9

Illinois Legislative District 9 goes as far south as Kilbourn and Roosevelt Road; as far west as as far north as I-90 and Fullerton and as far east as Clark and Division. (These are approximations based on the map above.) Major community assets include Douglas Park, Ogden Avenue (Historic Route 66, which connects Chicago and California), I-290, I-94 and the western section of the West Loop, University of Illinois, the western part of the Financial District.

As may be seen on the table below, the total population in the Illinois Legislative District 9 increased from 109,406 in 2010 to 112,662 in 2018. This represents an increase of 3,256 people or 2.98%. The White population increased from 29.1% of the Legislative District population in 2010 to 30.3% during the same period. This represents a 1.2 percentage **point** change, or a 4.12% increase between the last Census count and 2018. The Black population decreased from 52.7% of the Legislative District 9 population in 2010 to 47.6% of the District's population in 2018. This represents a 5.10 percentage **point** decrease, but a 9.68% decrease in the Black population between 2010 and 2018. The Latino population comprised 8.7% of the Legislative District 9 population in 2010, and 9.8% in 2018. This represents a 1.1 **percentage point** increase, or a 12.64% change in Latino population in the Legislative District 9 population.

The number of housing units went from 57,714 in 2010 to 54,034, suggesting a net decrease in housing stock of 3,677, or 6.37%. The average ratio of people to housing units increased from 1.89 persons per housing unit to 2.08 persons per housing unit between 2010 and 2018.

Illinois Legislative District 9 Demographics

	2010	2018	Change	Percent Change
Total Population	109,406	112,662	3,256.00	2.98%
White	29.10%	30.30%	1.20	4.12%
Black	52.70%	47.60%	-5.10	-9.68%
Native American	0.10%	0.10%	-	0.00%
Asian	7.80%	10.50%	2.70	34.62%
Latino/Hispanic	8.70%	9.80%	1.10	12.64%
Other	1.60%	1.70%	0.10	6.25%
Housing Units	57,714	54,037	-3677	-6.37%

The Black population has dropped 9.68%, which is significant, between 2010 and 2018. While the Apportionment data have not been released, it would not be surprising if they show a further decline in the number and percentages of Black population in Legislative District 9. At the same time, the Asian population, with a growth rate of 34.62%, is growing at approximately 11 times the 2.98% growth rate for the District. Even so, their population is only 10.5% of the District's population at the moment. The Latino population has grown 12.64%, which is more than 4 times

the growth of the District as a whole. The White population has also grown significantly, at 4.12%. If the District boundaries remain the same, it will no longer be a majority Black district. The District will have a Black plurality, comprising 47% of the District’s population. Whites would comprise the second largest population segment, with 30.30% Latinos would comprise the third largest segment, with 9.8% of the population.

Illinois Legislative District 10

Illinois Legislative District 10 goes as far south as Ogden and Cicero; as far west as Kilbourn and Roosevelt Road; as far north as Armitage and Larabee and as far east as Wells and Division. (These are approximations based on the map above.) Major community assets include I-290, I-94 and a system of railroads serving multiple manufacturing companies.

As may be seen on the table below, the total population in the Illinois Legislative District 10 increased from 97,387 in 2010 to 108,882 in 2018. This represents an increase of 11,495 people or 11.8%. The White population increased from 30.8% of the Legislative District population in 2010 to 32.20% during the same period. This represents a 1.4 percentage **point** change, or a 4.55% increase between the last Census count and 2018. The Black population decreased from 53.5% of the Legislative District 10 population in 2010 to 46.7% of the District’s population in 2018. This represents a 6.8 percentage **point** decrease, but a 12.7% decrease in the Black population between 2010 and 2018. The Latino population comprised 12.4% of the Legislative District 10 population in 2010, and 16.8% in 2018. This represents a 4.4 **percentage point** increase, or a 35.48% change in Latino population in the Legislative District 10 population.

The number of housing units went from 45,170 in 2010 to 49,112, suggesting a net increase in housing stock of 4,242, or 9.39%. The average ratio of people to housing units increased from 2.15 persons per housing unit to 2.20 persons per housing unit between 2010 and 2018.

Illinois Legislative District 10 Demographics

	2010	2018	Change	Percent Change
Total Population	97,387	108,882	11,495.00	11.80%
White	30.80%	32.20%	1.40	4.55%
Black	53.50%	46.70%	-6.80	-12.71%
Native American	0.10%	0.10%	-	0.00%
Asian	2.10%	2.20%	0.10	4.76%
Latino/Hispanic	12.40%	16.80%	4.40	35.48%
Other	1.10%	2.00%	0.90	81.82%
Housing Units	45,170	49,412	4,242	9.39%

The Black population has dropped 12.71%, which is significant, between 2010 and 2018. While the Apportionment data have not been released, it would not be surprising if they show a further decline in the number and percentages of Black population in Legislative District 10. At the same time, the Latino population, with a growth rate of 35.48% is growing at nearly 3 times the 11.8% growth rate for the District. The White population has also grown significantly, at 4.55%. If the District boundaries remain the same, it will no longer be a majority Black district. The District will have a Black plurality, with Whites comprising the second largest population segment.

Treatment of Prisoners in Census Count

I have just learned that the Legislature has actually passed legislation to count prisoners from their last known addresses before coming to prison. However, the law won't take effect until 2025, effectively kicking the can down the road 10 years. We would therefore, need to live with the current system until the next Census count. Senate District 5 is more adversely impacted by this policy than any other Senate District in the State. A study by CBS Local indicated that 5,535 prisoners returned to Senate District 5 from IDOC. Six of the 10 Illinois Zip Codes with the most returning prisoners are on Chicago's West Side, with all or some land mass in Senate District 5.

Zip Codes With The Highest Number of Returning Prisoners

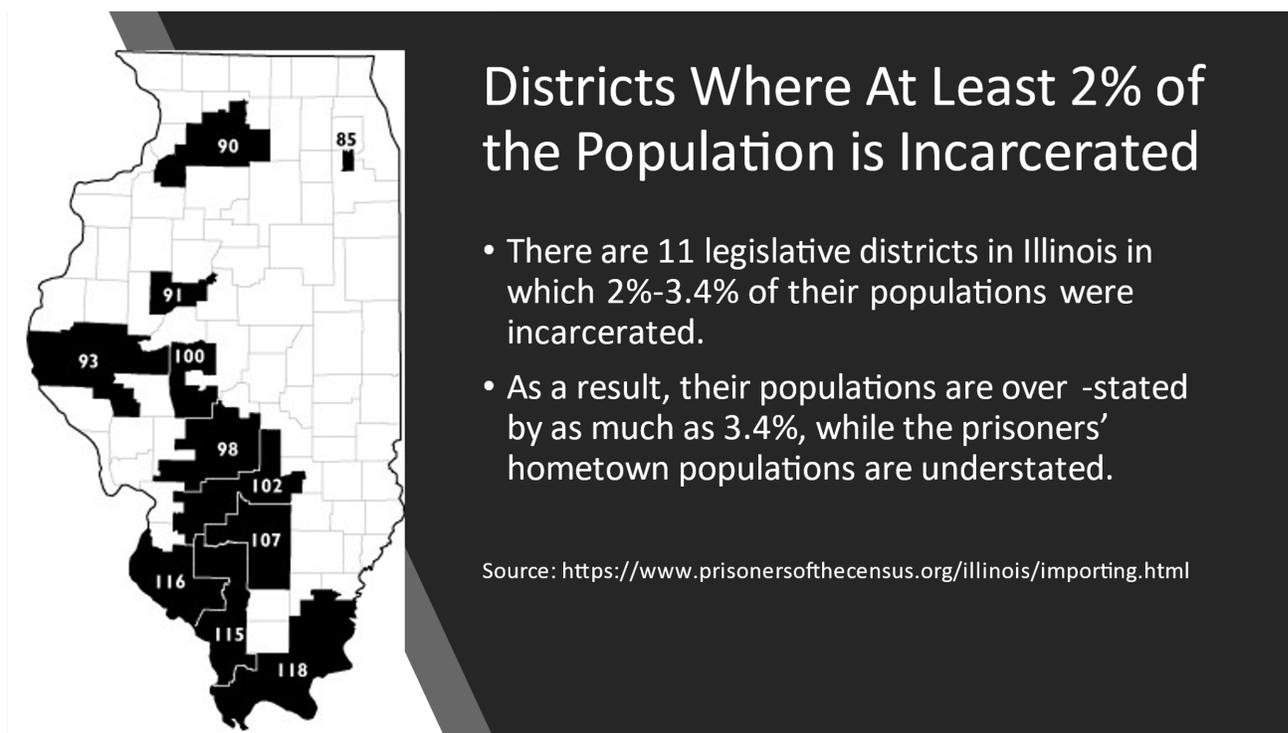
Zip Code	Returning Prisoners
60608	1,570
60607	923
60624	779
60644	679
60651	616
60623	540
60621	428
	5,535

6 of the 10 Illinois Zip Codes with the most returning prisoners are on Chicago's West Side, with all or some land mass in Senate District 5.

Source: CBS Local 2013

Under current law, incarcerated persons are not counted in the Census numbers of the community from which they originate, but in the populations of the towns in which they are incarcerated. As a result, the Census numbers in Chicago for African Americans is significantly undercounted, while the voting numbers in some Downstate communities is inflated by over 95%. On top of that,

representatives from the districts in which the prisoners are incarcerated have a history of voting against legislation that will enhance education, job training and rehabilitation of prisoners. In effect, prisoners have no representation, and this is a clear violation of the “one man, one vote”, guaranteed by our Constitution.



On the other hand, legislators from the prisoners' originating communities tend to be the ones advocating for improved education and rehabilitation services for prisoners who are not counted in their districts' population. Downstate towns are receiving entitlement funds for Community Development Block Grants and Social Service Development Block Grants that benefit their communities, but not the prisoners. Adding insult to injury, at least two representatives with prison towns in their districts signed onto a House Resolution calling for Chicago to be made a separate state from the rest of Illinois.

When the prisoners return home their originating communities are the ones who must help them transition by providing housing, job training and other social services. Unfortunately, the originating communities don't get their full share of funding because the prisoners were counted in the Downstate town's Census statistics. I respectfully request that the Legislature amend the law to effect the change immediately.

Illinois Will Probably Lose A Congressional Seat

Because the State of Illinois' population grew at a slower rate than most states in the country, we will be losing a Congressional seat. Chicago's three Congressional Districts headed by African Americans have each lost population and must expand boundaries. During the last redistricting process, there were proposals to eliminate one of the districts. We respectfully request that any new boundaries be drawn to protect the voting rights of African Americans by ensuring that we continue to be represented by each of the African American members of the Illinois Delegation. It

should be noted that African Americans, as a percentage of Chicago's population was reduced by less than 1 percent during the last Census. It should also be reiterated that our numbers are significantly undercounted due to the numbers of African Americans incarcerated in Downstate prisons.

-The North Lawndale Community Should Be Kept Intact

Currently, the entire North Lawndale Community, as defined by Chicago Community Area 29, is located in the 9th Legislative District and the 7th Congressional District. We respectfully request that the House of Representatives Special Committee on Redistricting keep the community intact to ensure that the special needs of our community are addressed by a single legislator. We have heard testimony from social service providers from other communities indicating the level of confusion caused by delivering services to a client base with multiple legislators and other local government officials.

Configure Senate District 5 and Legislative Districts 9 and 10 Such That Those Districts Are Majority Black, If Possible

As indicated before, the Apportionment data are not yet available. However, We respectfully request, that to the extent possible, these Districts be drawn with majority Black populations, pursuant to the Voting Rights Act. We would also request, that the boundaries be drawn as compact as possible, with a regular shape. This would enhance the likelihood that the Districts would be drawn in a manner that would keep communities together.

In closing, we thank you for your time and consideration, and hosting this public forum. If you have any questions, I may be reached at 773-521-3137 or valeriefleonard@nonprofitutopia.com